

cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."

Championing the cause of children and garnering tangible results that effect the everyday lives of many Mainers are the true measure of Mark's phenomenal trajectory of accomplishment in helping others. And so, we couldn't be more grateful to Mark for what has given and continues to give back to Maine, and I couldn't be more pleased about this tribute bestowed upon him which is a fitting recognition of all he has achieved on behalf of all whom he has served.●

#### TRIBUTE TO JACK VAN DER GEEST

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the 85th birthday of Jack van der Geest of Rapid City, SD. A native of the Netherlands and author of "Was God on Vacation?", Jack's life story is a heroic depiction of courage and the willingness to act against the evils that threaten our world and our freedoms.

Born in the Netherlands in 1923, Jack's younger years witnessed the horrifying and devastating effect of Nazi Germany in Europe. Jack endured many trials and tribulations after the Nazis invaded his homeland in 1940; however, none of them would prove to break Jack's spirit of perseverance. After his capture, Jack's resilience served him well as he became one of only eight prisoners to escape from the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Following Jack's escape from terror in the heart of Nazi Germany, he further pledged his services to fight the Nazi occupation throughout Europe. Jack joined the French Underground and helped Allied paratroopers escape capture in Vichy, France. Soon after, Jack arrived in England where he became an interpreter for the storied 101st Airborne. Jack eventually immigrated to America and became a United States citizen in 1953.

In 1995, Jack authored the book "Was God on Vacation?", an autobiography of his life during World War II. This astonishing work gives an in-depth account of Jack's struggles and endeavors from 1940-1947. Jack's testimony truly shines a light on the persecution and challenges many Europeans endured during World War II and how some fought dearly to repel the Nazi aggressors. The story of Jack van der Geest reminds us to never take for granted the freedoms that so many have fought for in our armed services and around the world.

I would like to send my heartfelt congratulations to Jack on his 85th birthday and thank him for telling his story and allowing us all to never forget how fortunate we are to be free.●

#### RECOGNIZING ARMOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Armour Elementary School for being named a 2008 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School. The commitment to quality education that has been shown by the faculty, teachers and students at Armour Elementary School is truly invaluable in shaping the future leaders of this country. The work that they are doing to meet higher achievement standards and greater accountability serves as a model to other schools throughout our State and Nation.

Again, congratulations to Armour Elementary School for being named a blue ribbon school and for making South Dakota proud.●

#### RECOGNIZING WHITEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Whitewood Elementary School for being named a 2008 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School. The commitment to quality education that has been shown by the faculty, teachers and students at Whitewood Elementary School is truly invaluable in shaping the future leaders of this country. The work that they are doing to meet higher achievement standards and greater accountability serves as a model to other schools throughout our State and Nation.

Again, congratulations to Whitewood Elementary School for being named a blue ribbon school and for making South Dakota proud.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the presiding officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 11:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Brandon, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 2403. An act to designate the United States courthouse located in the 700 block of East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, as the "Spottswood W. Robinson III and Robert R. Merhige Jr., United States Courthouse".

S. 2617. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify increases in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans that were effective as of December 1, 2007, to provide for an increase in the rates of such compensation effective December 1, 2008, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

At 6:18 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5167. An act to terminate the authority of the President to waive, with regard to Iraq, certain provisions under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 unless certain conditions are met.

H.R. 6889. An act to extend the authority of the Secretary of Education to purchase guaranteed student loans for an additional year, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 390. Concurrent resolution honoring the 28th Infantry Division for serving and protecting the United States.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 5938) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide secret service protection to former Vice Presidents, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 5167. An act to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 to remove the authority of the President to waive certain provisions; to the Committee on Armed Services.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 390. Concurrent resolution honoring the 28th Infantry Division for serving and protecting the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

#### ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on September 16, 2008, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 2403. An act to designate the United States courthouse located in the 700 block of East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, as the "Spottswood W. Robinson III and Robert R. Merhige, Jr., United States Courthouse".

S. 2617. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify increases in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans that were effective as of December 1, 2007, to provide for an increase in the rates of such compensation effective December 1, 2008, and for other purposes.